

## **Opening Statement of**

**James R. Mahoney**

**Nominated to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce  
For Oceans and Atmosphere**

**Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C.**

**January 24, 2002**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to come before you today regarding my nomination for Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. I am honored that the President has chosen me for this position, and I am very grateful for the continuous encouragement and support of Secretary Evans, Deputy Secretary Bodman and Admiral Lautenbacher, who will be my supervisors in this position. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to appear before you at this early time immediately after your return from recess. If confirmed by the Senate, I will take up my position at the earliest possible date.

I was born and raised in Syracuse, New York, and I received an outstanding undergraduate education, majoring in physics, at LeMoyne College in my home town. My career has involved over 40 years of continuous focus on the environmental and earth sciences, with a strong emphasis in the atmospheric, climate, hydrological and oceanographic areas. I have benefitted from diverse work responsibilities in academic, corporate, government and international settings. I look forward to applying this experience in helping the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Commerce Department to address their critical national missions.

I received a Ph.D. degree in meteorology from MIT, and then immediately joined the Faculty of Public Health at Harvard University, in its Department of Environmental Health Sciences. This early-career focus on public health and the environment set me on a course of responsible environmental management that has influenced all of my professional work.

Drawing upon my Harvard experience, I was co-founder of an environmental management company, then known as Environmental Research & Technology, Inc. (ERT) which grew to become the nation's largest environmental firm by the end of the 1970's, operating throughout the United States and several other nations. By 1975 ERT had become the largest employer of meteorologists and related technical specialists in the United States, except for the federal government itself. My experience with ERT provided great lessons on the management of a large technical organization. This experience was later enhanced during my service as a senior executive at the Bechtel Group in San Francisco and International Technology Corporation in Los Angeles and Washington.

I came into public service as Director of the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP), working in the Executive Office of the President from 1988 through early 1991. NAPAP was a unique 10-year program created by the Energy Security Act of 1979, and charged with recommending sound approaches to controlling acid rain effects, while providing

for continued energy and economic security for the nation. My service as NAPAP Director included the completion of the 10-year program involving the work of more than 2,000 technical and economic specialists; the publication of a major, internationally-reviewed acid rain compendium; and extensive issue analyses supporting the development of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. My NAPAP experience is particularly relevant to today's global climate change issues: complex scientific and technological questions, intertwined with substantial energy and economic security issues, are best addressed in a comprehensive fashion, preferably with a well-defined assessment plan that incorporates all of the principal issues under consideration.

In addition to my experience in the United States, I have worked in more than fifty other nations in several different roles: negotiating and overseeing international joint venture technical companies, representing the U.S. government in specialist exchanges, advising government agencies on sustainable industry, fishery and agricultural practices (particularly in developing nations), and advising several United Nations and other international agencies.

I am a Fellow and former President of the 12,000-member American Meteorological Society, which serves the atmospheric, oceanographic and hydrological fields. I am gratified that during my term as President (beginning in 1990) the AMS undertook to expand its service to American and international society. As a result of a strategic review conducted during my term as President, AMS committed to a long-term program of support for science education at all levels, encouragement of technical careers for minority students, and the application of sound science to complex public issues including disaster preparedness, environmental protection and global climate change, among others.

I have been honored to serve on several committees of the National Academy of Sciences dealing with weather and climate, environmental protection and science education, beginning in the early 1970's. In 1999 I completed a term as Co-Chairman of the Academy's Board on Atmospheric Science and Climate.

I am committed to supporting Admiral Lautenbacher in assisting NOAA with its highly important missions aimed at understanding, protecting and enhancing our ocean, coastal, fishery, atmospheric and climate resources. NOAA has the benefit of a large number of highly skilled scientific, technical and administrative personnel, and I shall do all I can to help "build on strength" to enhance the careers of all NOAA personnel, and to further improve NOAA's service to the nation and the world.

Should I have the privilege of your endorsement and confirmation by the Senate, I pledge my continuous best efforts to serve the President, the Secretary of Commerce and the entire NOAA team. I also pledge my full responsiveness to members and staff of this Committee, as well as to the entire Senate and House of Representatives.

I want to acknowledge and thank my wife Taya Mahoney who provides continuing love and support for my work; my six adult children, their spouses and our eleven grandchildren who give meaning to our family life; and, not the least, our five-year-old twin daughters who bring us joy every day.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today.